

Certainly O'Laughlin's most controversial engagement was her role in 2000's Elian Gonzalez saga. Moved by the little boy whose mother had died while they were fleeing Cuba by raft to the US, she initially acted as a neutral mediator, hosting meetings between the boy's Miami relatives and his Cuban grandmothers in their tug-of-war for custody. Hers was an unpopular position that spawned death threats, bomb threats, and plenty of hate mail.

Then, suddenly, the neutral nun became an ardent advocate for the Miami relatives, urging the government to allow Elian to stay in the US. O'Laughlin says her emotions included fear, compassion, and rejection during a period she describes as one of the most difficult in her life, but insists her faith got her through.

"When I went to bed at night, I had to tell the Lord it was in his hands, and, 'If I offended, I ask pardon. If I haven't, I sure hope you'll help me the next day,'" O'Laughlin reveals. "When I talked to [former Attorney General] Janet Reno about Elian after it was over, she quoted Truman. She said we were both searching for the truth."

Generally, O'Laughlin's disarming manner has been key to her success in helping people, say those who have worked closely with her.

"With the 'honey' here and the 'honey' there, she gets a lot of things accomplished," says Leslie Pantin Jr., chairman of Barry's board of trustees. "She continues to instill in Barry a unique, caring environment while being involved in every major cause we've had in South Florida, from the airport to rebuilding after Hurricane Andrew to the fight against drugs, and of course the Elian Gonzalez position."

O'Laughlin may be loathe to admit it, but one of her toughest fights was her personal battle with lung cancer. She underwent two lung cancer surgeries in the past few years (she never smoked) but has hardly slowed down. After stepping down as Barry's president last summer to allow a new face with a new perspective to take the university to the next level, she continued to focus on education, albeit with a slightly different twist. O'Laughlin's mission now is to teach women how to open universities in developing countries.

"It would be really great if the Lord would let me, before I turn up my toes, play a role in getting schools started and I don't care at what level—because we'll never have peace, we'll never have a legitimate fight against poverty, unless we have education," she says.

In her quasi-retired life, O'Laughlin remains involved in various South Florida organizations, and has faith that the region will become a model that the whole world will envy.

"South Florida has all right ingredients: good people, an embracing climate, and welcoming shores," O'Laughlin says. "My vision and hope is that we continue to open our arms and caress our people and energize them to create a greater state and a greater South Florida by giving their gifts back to this great place."

TRIBUTE TO WILFRED "MICKYE" JOHNSON

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an Iowan who serves as a great

community leader and role model for youth, Wilfred "Mickye" Johnson of Cedar Falls.

A native of eastern Iowa, Mickye has worked with the Classic Upward Bound Program at the University of Northern Iowa since 1988, and has been its director since 1994. Through his work, Mickye has helped countless students attend college and receive high-level academic instruction during their high school years.

In addition to his duties with the Upward Bound program, Mickye has had a number of volunteer roles with various groups, including the Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans, the Iowa Community Health Leadership Institute, the Waterloo Community Development Board, the Iowa Child Support Advisory Committee, and the Methodist Church Administrative Council. Additionally, he has worked to promote business opportunities and community involvement for African-American professionals and leaders in the Cedar Valley community in Iowa.

Mickye's work on behalf of young people extends beyond the classroom. For seven years now he has been a featured speaker for my Youth Summit, which brings together students from all over eastern Iowa to learn about leadership, education, and teamwork. Mickye has served as a motivational speaker at this event, and he always gives a challenging and productive message to the students in attendance. He has often used the humor of a simple lemon as a prop to impress upon his students the importance of life skills and character education to improve their lives.

Mickye received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Northern Iowa, and also holds a Masters of Education Degree. A believer in lifelong learning, he is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Northern Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Mickye Johnson for his good work. His service and leadership in Iowa make him a role model for any believer in education and community service.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE REAUME

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mike Reaume for his dedication and commitment to improving the community of Corona, California. On January 14, 2006, the Corona Chamber of Commerce recognized Mike for serving as the chairman of the board for the chamber during 2005.

After joining the Corona Chamber in 1999, Mike quickly became an active member of various chamber committees. His involvement included work with the Website, Ambassadors, and Corona Night with the Angels Committees. While serving on the chamber's board of directors, Mike was elected as vice president, chairman-elect, and, most recently, chairman of the board. In addition to his dedication to the chamber, Mike owns an insurance brokerage firm, Reaume Insurance Services, which specializes in employee benefits for employers and individuals.

During Mike's term as chairman, the chamber continued to grow in membership and de-

velop new strategies to strengthen the relationships within the business community. The chamber exceeded the goals it set for the year by increasing membership up to nearly 1,150 members representing over 35,000 jobs in the region. Furthermore, the new members made an immediate impact by noticeably increasing the participation levels and attendance at chamber events.

Community-based organizations, like chambers of commerce, rely extensively on committed and dynamic individuals who take the initiative to address important issues facing their community. Mike's dedicated service epitomizes the selfless, hard-working spirit that is the backbone of communities throughout our great nation. The Corona Chamber and the community of Corona are significantly better off thanks to Mike's tireless efforts.

I want to express my appreciation for Mike's tremendous contributions on behalf of our entire community and congratulate him on the tremendous leadership he displayed as chairman of the board.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MAYOR WILLIAM J. COOK

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mayor William "Billy Joe" J. Cook of Camden, Arkansas who died Friday, December 16, 2005 at the age of 80.

A Navy veteran, Mayor Cook attended Arkansas Teachers College in Conway where he obtained a dual degree in business and mathematics. Working for ten years as a salesman for Burroughs Business Machines in Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and El Dorado, Mayor Cook decided to go into business with his father as a distributor of Texaco products in Camden.

No stranger to public service and remembered for his utmost integrity, Mayor Cook served on the Camden City Council for 7 years and as mayor of Camden for 2 years. In his free time, Mayor Cook enjoyed spending time outdoors tending to his garden and raising Tennessee Walking horses.

My heartfelt condolences go out to Mayor Cook's wife, Helen Lynch Cook; his daughter, Cindy Cook Tittle; and his sister, Weegie Watts. While Mayor Cook may no longer be with us, his legacy and his spirit will always live on in all the lives he touched.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF SANJNA VIJAYA PANDIT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Rahul and Lavannya Pandit of Houston, Texas, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Sanjna Vijaya Pandit was born on January 12, 2006, at 2:20 a.m., weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Sanjna has been born into a loving home, where she will